

GOD REIGNS IN LIGHT SUPREME
Responsorial Song from Psalm 97 for Christmas Dawn
CHRISTMAS DAWN GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Glory to God in the Highest

for Psalmist (Canticle), Assesment and Description
with Keyboard, Woodwinds, Brass & Guitar

TONY BARR

*This day a new light will shine upon the earth:
a child is born for us.*

God reigns in light supreme! Be glad, you nations of earth!
Mountains and valleys, islands and coastlands, rejoice!
The heavens are ablaze in radiant beauty,
Those who keep vigil see justice arise on the earth.

Those who live with honor now see a great light,
all who keep watch are thrilled beyond measure.
Take delight, you just, in the all Powerful God,
the Holy, the Strong One, the God of the Living.

Fire leaps from the heavens to scorch the way,
and lightning flashes across the land.
earth quakes and shakes at the sight of God's splendor,
while the heavens reverberate at God's coming to judge us.

Good news of great joy!

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Glory to God in the highest.

Peace on earth to all of good will

Psalms 96, 97 and 98 belong to the Hymn collection of Enthronement Psalms. Each celebrates the Kingship of Yahweh. They were composed during the Feast of Tabernacles, a development of the more primitive New Year Festival. The tenth century BCE, they are among the songs of David. After the return from Exile, there was a tremendous level of hope and expectation that the new (rebuilt) Temple would eventually become the house of prayer for all peoples.

Psalm 97, the Universal King, appears to have been assembled from ancient fragments, its inscription claiming to be from David when his land was restored. A hymn in the Jerusalem tradition, it refers to God in personal terms as a present for one occasion using the more impersonal Most High of the Northern tradition. Some of the fragments may have originated in David's time, but the current text is probably from the restoration period following the return from Babylonian Exile some five hundred years later. Its language is definitely post-Exilic.

The psalm has been cleverly assembled in two sections. The first (verses 1-6) sings of God's majesty, the second (verses 7-12) about God's faithful subjects.

- Tony Barr

See page 16 for an analysis of Psalm 97

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SAMPLE

God Reigns In Light Supreme

Responsorial Song from Psalm 97 for Christmas Day

OPTIONAL PRELUDE ♩ = ca. 66

Music & text from Psalm 97 Tony Barr

Flute

Oboe [in F] or Clarinet [in G]

Bb Trumpet

French Horn

Descant

Cantor/All

Piano

* All instruments, other than keyboard, are optional

Trumpet

French Horn

SHORT INTRO/INTERLUDE

Flute

Oboe

Gm7 Dm7 Gm7 Dm7

This section contains the musical notation for the short intro/interlude. It features three staves: Flute, Oboe, and Piano. The piano part includes a bass line and a treble line with chords. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The piano accompaniment consists of a steady bass line and chords in the right hand, alternating between Gm7 and Dm7.

REFRAIN

Flute

Oboe

Horn

Descant I after v 1, II after v. 2

I
II

This day _____ new _____ light will shine up - on the earth. _____ A
All

This day _____ w _____ light will shine up - on the earth. _____ A

Gm7 Dm7 Gm7 Dm7

This section contains the musical notation for the refrain. It features four staves: Flute, Oboe, Horn, and Piano. The piano part includes a bass line and a treble line with chords. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The piano accompaniment consists of a steady bass line and chords in the right hand, alternating between Gm7 and Dm7. The lyrics are: "This day _____ new _____ light will shine up - on the earth. _____ A" and "All". Below the lyrics, there are two descant options: "I" and "II".

Flute

Oboe

Trumpet

Horn

child is born for

child is born for us.

B \flat /C B \flat maj7 C+2 B \flat C

Final

1-3. to Verses

The image shows a page of musical notation for a piece titled "GOD REIGNS IN LIGHT SUPREME - Ps 97, cont. (5)". The score is arranged for Flute, Oboe, Trumpet, Horn, and Piano. The vocal parts have lyrics: "child is born for" and "child is born for us.". The piano part includes chord markings: B \flat /C, B \flat maj7, C+2, B \flat , and C. A section labeled "Final" is at the bottom. A box at the top right indicates "1-3. to Verses". A large, bold, black "SAMPLE" watermark is overlaid diagonally across the entire page.

Please do not rush the chant verses.
Aim for the bounce in the sprung rhythm of the text.
Sing with the excitement as dictated by the text
But do not be over-dramatic, or drown in enthusiasm!

VERSES Psalmist (Cantor) from the ambo

Trumpet

Horn

Descant

3. Those who live with honor now see a great

light,

Cantor

1. God reigns in light supreme! Be glad, you nations of the earth!

2. Fire leaps from the heavens to sear the way,

3. Those who live with honor now see a great light,

Dsus4

Bb+2

3. all who keep watch are beyond

measure.

Mountains and hills, islands and coastlands, rejoice!

and lightning flashes at the land.

all who keep watch are beyond measure.

Bbsus4



3. Take, delight, you just, in the all Powerful One,

1. The heavens are ablaze in radiant
 2. earth quakes and shakes at the sight of God's
 3. Take, delight, you just, in the all

Powerful One,
 Splendor,
 Powerful One,

Dsus4

3. the Holy, the Strong One, God of the Living.

those who keep justice on the earth,
 while the lawless are at God's coming among us.
 the Holy, the Strong One, the God of the Living.

to Refrain

F sus4

SAMPLE

God Reigns In Light Supreme

Responsorial Song from Psalm 97 for Christmas Day

REFRAIN ♩ = ca. 66

Descant I after v 1, II after v. 2, I+II after v. 3

Music & text from Psalm 97 Tony Barr

I
II

This day a new light will shine up on the
All
This day a new light will shine up on the
earth. A child is born for
earth. A child is for

VERSES Psalmist (Cantor) from the Intro

Descant on Verse 3

3. Those who with hearts now see a great light,
Cantor

1. God in light supreme! Glad, you nations of earth!
2. Clouds leap from heavens to sear the way,
3. Those who live in darkness now see a great light,

3. all who keep watch are thrilled beyond measure.

1. Mountains and valleys, islands and coastlands, rejoice!
2. And lightning flashes across the land.
3. Those who keep watch are thrilled beyond measure.

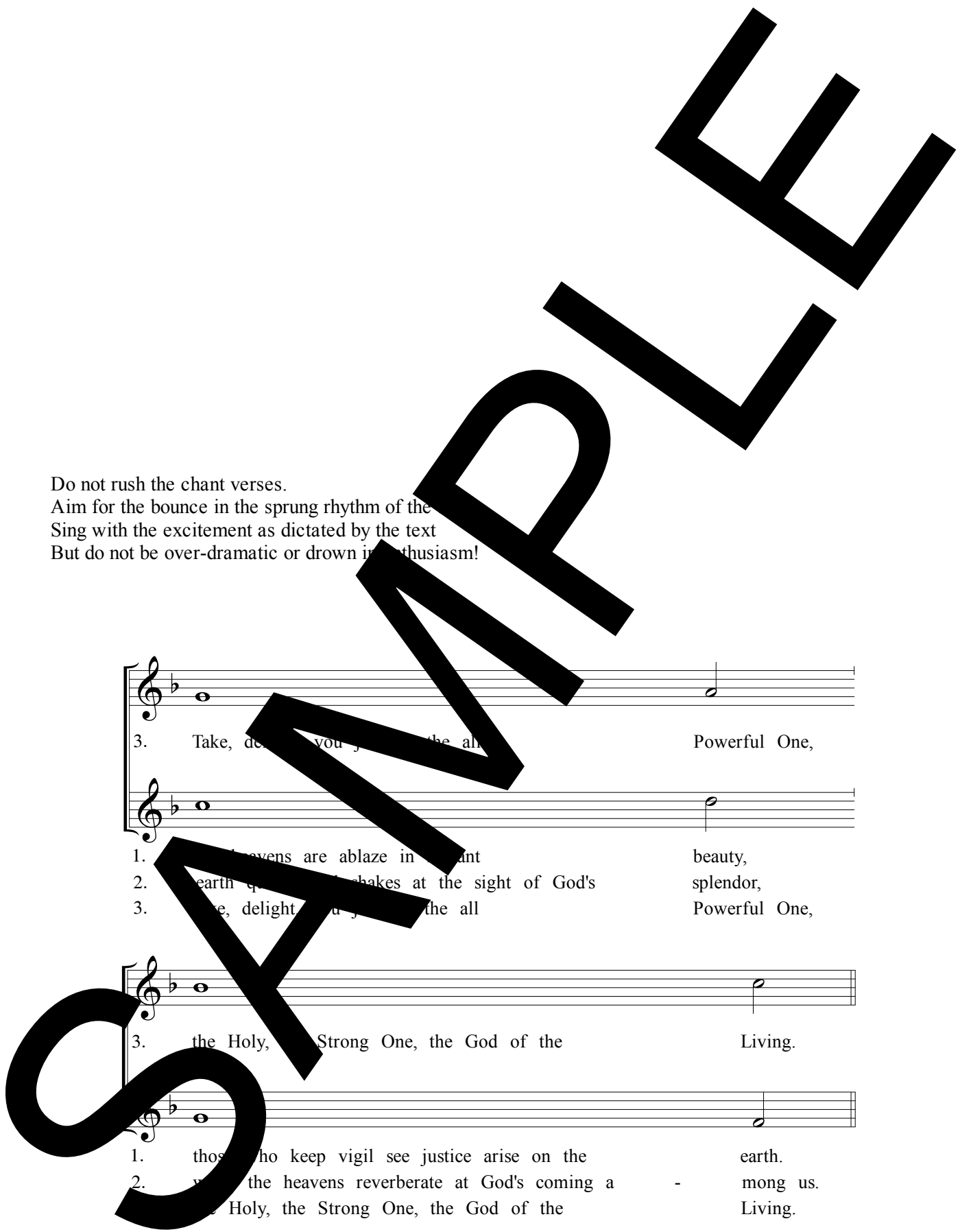
Do not rush the chant verses.
Aim for the bounce in the sprung rhythm of the
Sing with the excitement as dictated by the text
But do not be over-dramatic or drown in enthusiasm!

3. Take, delight in you, O Lord, the all-powerful One,

1. The heavens are ablaze in radiant beauty,
2. The earth quakes and shakes at the sight of God's splendor,
3. Take, delight in you, O Lord, the all-powerful One,

3. the Holy, the Strong One, the God of the Living.

1. those who keep vigil see justice arise on the earth.
2. The heavens reverberate at God's coming among us.
3. the Holy, the Strong One, the God of the Living.



Christmas Dawn Mass Alleluia

Glory to God

music & text from Luke 2:14 arr. **Tony Barr**

FANFARE ♩ = 84

Trumpet

Musical notation for the Trumpet part of the Fanfare, consisting of two staves in G major and 6/8 time. The melody is written in the upper staff, and the accompaniment is in the lower staff.

(Keyboard if no Brass)

Musical notation for the Keyboard part of the Fanfare, consisting of two staves in G major and 6/8 time. The melody is written in the upper staff, and the accompaniment is in the lower staff.

PROCLAMATION

Trumpet

Musical notation for the Trumpet part of the Proclamation, consisting of one staff in G major and 6/8 time.

Horn

Musical notation for the Horn part of the Proclamation, consisting of one staff in G major and 6/8 time.

Descant

Musical notation for the Descant part of the Proclamation, consisting of one staff in G major and 6/8 time.

Cantor

Musical notation for the Cantor part of the Proclamation, consisting of one staff in G major and 6/8 time. The lyrics are: "Good news! Good news of great joy! —"

(Keyboard if no Brass)

Musical notation for the Keyboard part of the Proclamation, consisting of two staves in G major and 6/8 time. The lyrics are: "Good news! Good news of great joy! —"

Hand Organ or Piano

ACCLAMATION

Descant

Descant

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

Cantor
Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!
All All

Organ or Piano
Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

The Acclamation section consists of three staves. The top staff is a Descant in G major, featuring a melodic line with a repeat sign. The second staff is for the Cantor, with two parts: the first part has lyrics 'Al - le - lu - ia!' and the second part has 'Al - le - lu - ia!' and 'All'. The third staff is for the Organ or Piano, with two parts: the first part has lyrics 'Al - le - lu - ia!' and the second part has 'Al - le - lu - ia!'.

VERSE 1

Descant

Glo - ry! - ry God! Glo - ry to God!

Cantor
Glo - ry to God in the high - Glo - ry! Glo - ry to God!

The Verse 1 section consists of three staves. The top staff is a Descant in G major, featuring a melodic line with a repeat sign. The second staff is for the Cantor, with two parts: the first part has lyrics 'Glo - ry! - ry God! Glo - ry to God!' and the second part has 'Glo - ry to God in the high - Glo - ry! Glo - ry to God!'. The third staff is for the Organ or Piano, with two parts: the first part has lyrics 'Glo - ry to God in the high -' and the second part has 'Glo - ry! Glo - ry to God!'.

Trumpet

Horn

(Keyboard if no Brass)

ACCLAMATION

Descant

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

Cantor

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

All

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

VERSE 2

Descant

Peace on earth! Peace to all of good will! _____

Peace on earth to all of good will! Peace on earth to all of good will! _____

Trumpet

Horn

(Keyboard if no Brass)

ACCLAMATION
Descant

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

Cantor

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

All

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

Organ or Piano

Trumpet

French Horn

(Keyboard if no Brass)

Organ or Piano

Christmas Dawn Mass Alleluia

Glory to God

music & text from Luke 2:14 arr. **Tony Barr**

PROCLAMATION ♩ = 76

Descant

Good news! Good news of great joy! —

Cantor

Good news! Good news of great joy!

ACCLAMATION

Descant

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

Cantor

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

All

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

VERSE 1

Descant

Glo - ry! Glo - ry! Glo - ry to God!

Cantor

Glo - ry to God! High - est! — Glo - ry! Glo - ry to God!

ACCLAMATION

Descant

Al - le - lu - ia!

Cantor

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu -

All

Al - le - lu - ia!

Al - le - lu - ia!

Al - le - lu - ia!

VERSE 2

Descant

Peace! Peace on earth to all of good will! _____

Cantor

Peace on earth to all of good will! on earth to all of good will! _____

ACCLAMATION

Descant

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

All

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

Analysis of Psalm 97

Section One: God's Kingship and Majesty verses vv 1-6

- 1 A call to worship addressed to the whole earth, not merely to Israel. This is a post-Exilic characteristic. *Coastlands* means more than the Mediterranean Sea, embracing the furthest ends of the earth.
- 2 Ancient word-pictures, some pre-dating Israel, describe God appearing. 'Concealed in the darkness of the cloud'.
Shekinah, evokes past [Sinai, (Dt 4:11, 5:22)] and future [the coming Day of the Lord (Ez 34:12, Jl 2:2, Zeph 1:15)]. God dwells in thick darkness, a cloud always veiling the divine glory (1 Kg 8:12, Chr 6:1, Jb 22:13, Is 6:4). This cloud guided Israel through the wilderness (Ex 13:21). The Lord rests on the throne of justice states firmly that justice is the basis of all kingship, ensuring a balance in society between weak and strong.
- 3 Probably every appearance of God was heralded by fire. Whether from thunderstorm or volcanic activity, the entire experience of Exodus is described in terms of fire (Ex 19:18, 24:17, Dt 5:4, 9:10-15, 18:16). This also recalls the experience of Isaiah being given the gift of prophecy, where the heavenly clouds were wreathed in smoke and glowing coals were placed on his lips.
- 4 Lightning, the fiery messengers of Psalm 104, was one of the weapons/tools of the divine King's power (Ps 144:6, Hab 3:11). It was also a sign of God's presence bringing light to the world (Ps 77:18). *Earth trembles and quakes* could mean either it trembled and quaked (a past-tense reference to some dramatic cultic activity surrounding a theophany which had been celebrated moments ago) or it will do so at some future age of God's final coming. The phrase was found in the Offertory Chant for Easter Day, *terra tremuit et quievit*, 'the earth shook and became still', alluding to Psalm 114 from the Hallel Psalter to describe the Exodus.
- 5 *Mountains become wax and bend low* is startling. Mountains, symbols of stability (Ps 30:7) and signs of God's first creation, now give way to a new order. God comes as Hero and Ruler of all the earth (Jos 3:11-13, Mi 4:13, Zech 4:14, 6:5) and the reference in Psalm 46 to describe *the mountains falling into the sea*.
- 6 The heavens are the divine messengers, addressing all the nations of earth and not merely Israel. This command echoes Psalm 94, for all people to bow and bend low before the Rock Who is our protection.

Section Two: For God Alone Is Worthy Of Praise vv 7-12

- 7 This section begins with a warning about pursuing worthless and false gods. *You who serve idols* is in contrast to Israel who worships the One and Only God (Is 42:17, 45:16, Jer 10:14).
- 8 In contrast, Zion, those who live in Jerusalem itself or who look to Jerusalem from afar, is delighted. God's words of wisdom are those judgements which cause the overthrow of the alien heathen forces.
- 9 *Far higher than other gods* is a passing reference to the remote God of the Powers, *Elohim* of the Northern Shrine tradition, where wayside wilderness shrines were favored over a Temple deity.
- 10 *The Lord loves those who reject evil* draws us into Covenant relationship. God and Israel together will build a new world, founded on justice and equality.
- 11 *The upright see a light* means *blessing*, they will be given reason to be thankful, since they will prosper and 'enjoy' salvation. In other words, they will be restored as a single people.

- Tony Barr
- 12 *Rejoice!* The psalm begins and ends with this invitation. To sing praise to the Holy and Strong One is to honor the name and the memory of the God who is justice to all people.